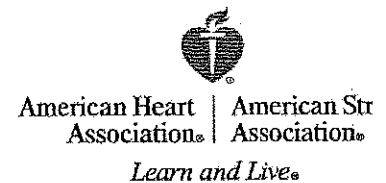


Committee on Children
February 27, 2014
John Bailey Government Relations Director
American Heart / Stroke Association



S.B. 48 An Act Concerning Nutrition Standards for Childcare Settings

Senator Bartolomeo and Representative Urban, and esteemed members of the Children Committee, my name is John Bailey, State Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association.

The American Heart Association supports S.B. 48 "An Act Concerning Nutrition Standards for Childcare Settings". With about one in three American kids and teens overweight or obese, nearly triple the rate in 1963, addressing the issue of good nutrition is critical in improving the health of our most vulnerable population.¹

Beverages are a key dietary determinant in the weight of children. With nearly one in four preschool-aged children overweight or obese, kids are entering school at an unhealthy weight and with unhealthy dietary habits. It is disconcerting that on any given day 84% of 2-5 year old children drink sugary drinks.² Serving only healthy foods and beverages in childcare settings can assist in establishing healthy eating behaviors and helps children avoid excess calories.

Excess weight at young ages has been linked to higher and earlier death rates in adulthood. Children and adolescents who are obese are likely to be obese as adults³ and are therefore more at risk for adult health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis.⁴ One study showed that children who became obese as early as age 2 were more likely to be obese as adults.⁵

Perhaps one of the most sobering statements regarding the severity of the childhood obesity epidemic came from former Surgeon General Richard Carmona, who characterized the threat as follows: "Because of the increasing rates of obesity, unhealthy eating habits and physical inactivity, we may see the first generation that will be less healthy and have a shorter life expectancy than

¹ Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Curtin LR, et al. Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity in the United States, 1999-2004. JAMA 2006;295:1549-55.

² Wang YC, Bleich SN, Gortmaker SL. Increasing caloric contribution from sugar-sweetened beverages and 100% fruit juices among US children and adolescents, 1988- 2004. Pediatrics. 2008;121:e1604-14.

³ Guo SS, Chumlea WC. Tracking of body mass index in children in relation to overweight in adulthood. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition 1999;70:S145-148

⁴ 6. Office of the Surgeon General. The Surgeon General's Vision for a Healthy and Fit Nation. Rockville, MD, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2010

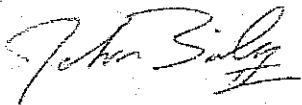
⁵ 12. Freedman DS, Kettel L, Serdula MK, Dietz WH, Srinivasan SR, Berenson GS. The relation of childhood BMI to adult adiposity: the Bogalusa Heart Study. Pediatrics 2005;115:22-27

their parents.”⁶

Nutrition education is meaningless if it is contradicted by other activities that promote unhealthy choices. Actions in the child care environment must support the messages being taught in the classroom and give children opportunities to practice healthy habit. When a child care program chooses to serve less nutritious beverages, it is easier for children to consume excess calories and introduces or reinforces unhealthy behaviors.

We look forward to working with you on passing this important piece of legislation that takes proactive steps to reduce the childhood obesity rate in our state and develop healthy nutritional habits in our children.

Sincerely,



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⁶ http://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@fc/documents/downloadable/ucm_304175.pdf